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Montana Historic  
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Commission  
Reckoning with  
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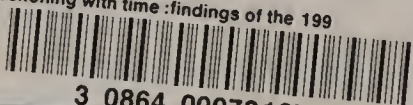
# RECKONING WITH TIME

*Findings of the  
1990 Montana Historic Sites  
Study Commission*

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# RECKONING WITH TIME

*Findings*

*of the*

*1990 Montana Historic Sites*

*Study Commission*

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## **RECKONING WITH TIME**

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**November 1990**



## Purpose

The Montana Historic Sites Study Commission was created by the Montana Historical Society to offer insights and recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, state agencies, and the general public on the value of historic and prehistoric sites in the state parks system, the kind of sites that should be in our state system, and on the care that they need. The idea for such a Commission sprang from a series of frustrations and opportunities that the staffs of the Montana Historical Society and Parks Division, Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) felt in increasing measure with the state's acquisition of the Moss and Daly Mansions. Both agencies were ready for the counsel of public preservationists and legislators in addressing how the State of Montana might better administer historic sites for public visitation.

### *Coordination with the Park Futures Committee*

The creation of the Commission dovetailed perfectly, if initially coincidentally, with the creation of the Park Futures Committee by FWP. At their direction, the Park Futures Committee undertook the much broader task of evaluating the viability of the entire state park system and the sites within it and identifying funding sources that could support improvements in the park system. The Park Futures Committee's research, legwork, public involvement, and recommendations encompassed consideration of historic and prehistoric sites, but needed to range far beyond those sites to an array of issues germane to the whole body of sites in the state park system.



Ulm Pishkun State Park  
near Ulm, Montana,  
August 1988. John  
Smart, MHS photogra-  
pher



### *Need for a Specific Historic Sites Study*

The Historic Sites Study Commission then swung its camera of consideration specifically to historic and prehistoric sites and brought the lens in close. We did so because:

- ▼ Historic and prehistoric sites comprise a majority of resource-based sites in state ownership for public visitation.
- ▼ Historic and prehistoric sites require special consideration—they are the ultimate non-renewable resource. More even than recreational and natural resources, their value will not outlast inadequate care and public indifference.
- ▼ A sharp look at the needs and opportunities offered by good stewardship of historic resources is critical for good public decisions. Good management of such resources is complex and warrants early detailed thought.
- ▼ There is no one in the park system and no one on the Park Futures Committee with specific expertise in the business of historic and prehistoric site care and administration. This statement does not speak to the great interest in and support for historic and prehistoric resources in those organizations, only to specific training and experience.
- ▼ The administration of historic and prehistoric sites is divided up confusingly among several state agencies and local organizations.
- ▼ While Montana is “the big sky” state and the state of Glacier National Park and blue ribbon trout streams, its appeal to visitors is and will continue to be as much its “old West” history and images. Cultural or heritage tourism is the next big “wave” to anticipate.

In the material that follows, the Commission spells out honestly and vividly the realities that it has found that lead to specific recommendations. In describing the circumstances and conditions that seem to warrant change, the Commission is not pointing fingers at any political party, administration, state agency, bureau, or personnel. Rather than look for someone else to blame, we finally have to look at ourselves and what it is that we have asked of ourselves or our legislators.



## Executive Summary

### *Findings of the 1990 Montana Historic Sites Study Commission*

The Montana Historic Sites Study Commission finds that:

- ▼ Montana possesses an unusually rich set of historic and prehistoric sites worthy of preservation for public visitation and interpretation.
- ▼ Cultural tourism will provide Montana with the amount, kind, and stability of new money in our economy that Montana desperately craves if we care for and properly develop our legacy of historic and prehistoric park sites. Statistics from around the Nation and Alberta support the premise.
- ▼ However, Montana cannot even begin to capitalize on the financial benefits of cultural tourism until we halt the rapid deterioration occurring at historic and prehistoric sites and take steps to guarantee their professional, ongoing stabilization, preservation, development, and interpretation. The very first step of professional care requires gaining sufficient knowledge of the resources within the parks system to even begin setting priorities for care and interpretation.
- ▼ This situation exists because:
  - Public and agency thinking focuses on recreational resources and natural resources far more than on cultural resources.
  - The Parks Division has no in-house, cultural resource expertise.
  - The absence of cultural resource knowledge perpetuates mismanagement, an inability to set priorities, inappropriate treatment.
  - Administration of state-owned historic and prehistoric sites is shared by several agencies without overall direction or order.
  - The absence of cultural resource interpretation sustains a public bias toward natural and recreational values.

*The Montana Historic Sites Study Commission offers the following recommendations:*

### *Essential Changes*

1. Secure legislative and gubernatorial directives and support for new Parks initiatives.
2. Insure the presence of at least two professional cultural resource specialists within the Parks Division.
3. Direct existing park managers to prepare small-scale, site-specific management plans.
4. Conduct reconnaissance inventory and assessment surveys to begin gathering baseline data on historic and prehistoric resource values and their needs.

5. Direct the two cultural resource specialists to begin internalizing a cultural resource ethic and program in Parks.
6. Create four support/partnership organizations to improve Parks care of historic and prehistoric parks and capitalize on public sector preservation expertise.
7. Continue to broaden legislative and Fish, Wildlife, and Parks understanding of how other state park systems protect historic sites and gain economic benefits from them.
8. Improve all state promotional literature and directional signs to better highlight historic and prehistoric sites.
9. Insure that decisions made within Parks about historic and prehistoric sites are centralized and clearly pinned to a few management positions.

### *Basic Changes*

1. Make sure that the reconnaissance and assessment inventories are completed for all park lands.
2. Create a professional historic preservation staff team in the Parks Division, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.
3. Complete the creation of policies, procedures, and educational efforts needed to internalize professional cultural resource care within Parks.
4. Use the preservation team to provide hands-on technical assistance to parks.
5. Use the preservation team and public support organizations to propose further strategies for preserving and interpreting historic park sites, including resolution of which state agency should oversee all state-owned and interpreted historic parks sites.
6. Use the preservation team to assist in appropriate designation and care of model park sites.

### *Long Range Changes for Park Cultural Resource Care*

1. Direct the preservation team to create criteria for future park designation and development.
2. Continue to inventory and assess cultural resources at a wider range of sites, especially likely candidates for state park designation.
3. Authorize and fund cultural resource specialist positions within at least some of the specific historic and prehistoric park areas.



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## ***Looking Forward to Preserving Montana's Past***

by  
Lawrence J. Sommer  
Montana Historical Society Director

Most places with a historical legacy as rich and varied as Montana's also possess a visual and architectural heritage worthy of that legacy. The pioneer men and women who had the courage to develop Montana's resources and economy also had the imagination to erect homes, churches, schools, and other buildings that reflect determination and pride in their accomplishments. Montana, perhaps more than any other western state, still possesses the physical evidence of its rich past as reflected in its buildings, historical, and archeological sites as well as in its spectacular landscape.

It is a heritage worthy of preservation.



WPA Excavation, Pictograph Cave, Evelyn Z. Thompson Album

Because we live in an era of incredibly rapid change, everyone needs ways to recognize and hold on to their cultural and physical roots. No matter where one lives, historical sites and buildings can teach much about our heritage. But even in a place like Montana, not every old building, not every historical site can or should be saved. Some probably should not be. At the same time, however, no building should be torn down and no site should be destroyed merely because it is old. Those structures and sites that contribute significantly to the state's heritage should be preserved for the enjoyment and education of future generations. By retaining historical sites and structures from earlier periods of Montana's history, we are in a position to better understand and



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judge our contemporary values and whether we are making progress toward a better quality of life.

Preservation of historical resources does not occur as an isolated activity. All historic preservation activity, if it is to be successful, must be integrated into overall economic development and must interrelate with the state or local political, social and cultural frameworks. The interaction among all of these factors determines our relative interest in and approach to the preservation of our significant historical, architectural, archeological, and related cultural resources. In Montana, unfortunately, the record to date has not been outstanding. There have been a few notable preservation successes, to be sure, but, by and large, apathy and a lack of resources have resulted in losses that in any other state would be regarded as tragic. At the same time, however, Montana's vast size, sparse population, isolation, and economic condition have probably saved the state from even greater losses, but time is clearly running out. Many of Montana's historic treasures simply cannot survive many more years of benign neglect. Without an imaginative plan and a strong commitment to protect and nurture the preservation of Montana's cultural heritage, there will be little of this heritage left as the state enters the twenty-first century. Montana confronts a crisis of potentially losing much of the physical evidence of its unique western heritage that has such broad appeal to both residents and visitors. Although it may not always seem like it, Montana is changing economically, demographically, socially, and culturally. Ways need to be found to effectively manage this change so the best of the old can be integrated successfully with the best of the new, thereby assuring that the cultural resources and values that make Montana a special place can survive. We must be careful to avoid destroying the very things we need most to preserve if we are to avoid losing our sense of place and western identity.

In the American West, and particularly in Montana, the majestic vastness of the landscape, the great sense of open space, plays a significant role in defining the state's cultural identity. In such a rural environment, historic preservation activity must acknowledge the inseparable links between landscape and historic resources. In Montana many of the state's townsites, ranches, trails, mining districts, battlefields, Native American sites, and even some prehistoric sites, take their essential character from their setting. The vast scale of Montana's open space is a vital aspect of our relationship with the land. The future preservation of Montana's cultural heritage cannot ignore this relationship and, indeed, must give as much emphasis to setting as to the resource itself.

Because Montana has existed for only a century as a state, Montanans sometimes tend to believe that their state's heritage is not very significant. This is simply not true. Few, if any places in the United States, possess a heritage as diverse and rich as Montana's. Perhaps more than any other western state, Montana embodies the very essence of America's perception of the West. It is this heritage, along with the natural grandeur, that draws people from around the world to Montana.

We must look forward to preserving Montana's past.

## The Opportunities

Three years ago, the Province of Alberta opened a new unit of its Provincial Heritage System—the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre. After 10 years and over 10 million dollars in research and development funds, the Head-Smashed-In site was ready for visitors with a dramatic visitor center, an ongoing research program, walking tours, a parking lot shuttle bus system, and a Native American interpretive staff. More than a quarter of a million people have visited each year since the Centre opened. This particular site is an hour and a half north and west of the Montana/Alberta border, outside the small historic community of Fort McLeod. By distance and appearance it is more remote than Pictograph Cave and about as far off the beaten path as Bannack. It shares the same prehistoric, geologic, and geographic determinants as Ulm Pishkun and a range of other buffalo jump sites along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. Its visitation is borne of profound interest in the story there—how High Plains prehistoric and historic peoples survived in this climate on this landscape. Montana schools are beginning to use it as a destination for field trips. For example, fifth-graders from Columbia Falls slept in the gymnasium of a Fort McLeod school in order to afford the trek to the Centre.

When we reckon with time here in Montana, we are reckoning with the richest set of opportunities. A long prehistoric past and a short, specific, intense historic past have left on the Montana landscape the sites that Hollywood drools over. The patterns of human exploration and survival on the grass, animals, trees, and minerals are visible in many Montana landscapes and remaining manmade resources: campsites, pictographs, mines of historic and prehistoric vintage, trails, main streets, homes, barns, and public buildings. Our history is the history of the Old West in all its honest and mythical proportions. By dint of distance and limited population, we have not lost all the remnants left from that history to relentlessly growing subdivisions and industrial parks. Nor have we lost too much of our past to cute makeovers and remodelings. However, we do lose resources to steady deterioration, to vandalism, and, in some cases, to the wear and tear of use or thoughtless misuse. But a lot of our most powerful, appealing past survives: in ghost towns, mine adits, prehistoric art, prehistoric campsites and quarries, trail ruts, homestead complexes, bridges, early roads, etc. And, even though haphazardly designated, many of those sites are already in state ownership: Ulm Pishkun, Bannack, Rosebud Battlefield, Chief Joseph Battlefield, Giant Springs, Three Forks of the Missouri, Daly Mansion. So, time has left us with very interesting, very visitable sites—many of which are already in state ownership. (See Appendix A for a summary of interpreted park sites in state ownership.)

Next, historic site tourism pays. Although Montana has not conducted as detailed a study as some states, 1988 Montana summer statistics indicate that visiting historic sites was the second most important activity sought by out-of-state visitors. A spate of studies from other states exists to document that a substantial number of visitors *travel* to see historic places and *spend time* (and hence money) in the process. Of the several factors that provoke travel nationwide, interest in historic sites is as high as in natural resources.



- ▼ In Arizona 59% of all visitors indicate that they go to historic sites, second only to sightseeing as a category of activity.
- ▼ In Iowa historic attractions are most frequently mentioned as the reason for making unscheduled side trips.
- ▼ In Oklahoma 42% of visitors surveyed mentioned historic sites and museums as being most important or very important in their decisions about a vacation destination.
- ▼ In Oregon 50% of all visitors indicate that they go to historic sites and museums, ranking third after sightseeing and shopping/dining.

(James Makens, Professor of Management at the Babcock School of Business, Wake Forest University. "The Importance of U. S. Historic Sites as Visitor Attractions." *Journal of Travel Research*. Tourism and Travel Research Association, Winter, 1987.)

Likewise, the economic impact on local and area economies from visitors to historic and cultural sites has been tallied. The Province of Alberta developed a system of assessing impact, designed especially for the small town environment of several of their cultural centers. In its first full year of operation (1988), the Head-Smashed-In-Buffalo Jump visitation and operation was expected to put 3.1 million dollars into the Fort McLeod area economy. In actual surveys, 82% of the visitors stayed longer than an hour and a half just at the Centre. Two thirds of the visitors stayed in the area longer than a day. The 180,000 visitors projected for the first year resulted in area employment of 58 people. Having surveyed several Alberta sites, the study concluded that 4.6 private sector jobs are created for every staff position at a cultural site.

(Ronald J. Helmhold and Mark A. Rasmussen. "The Economic Impact of Provincial Heritage Facilities in Alberta." Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, Historical Resources, Division, August 31, 1988.)

**So Montana needs to reckon with the fact that its history and prehistory have left it with a legacy of fascinating, visitable sites that are important not only emotionally but for the amount, kind, and stability of the dollars that—thoughtfully developed—they could contribute to our economy.**

Richard J. Roddewig, Senior Partner, Clarion Associates Inc., Chicago, speaks and provides technical assistance to states and cities on business development, property appraisals, and cultural tourism. In a speech given at a March 1988 Seminar in New Orleans titled "Selling the City. . . Without Selling Out: The Challenge of Tourism Management," Roddewig offered some salient directions:

Countries, states, and cities are engaged in cutthroat competition for the tourism dollar. The competition is rugged because the stakes are high. Tourism is the second largest retailing industry in the United States today. . . . Those states that protect and develop their historic sites will be the leaders in American tourism in the



21st century. Why? Studies from around the country are beginning to show that historic sites and buildings are among the one or two most important attractions to tourists and travelers. . . . The savviest states are beginning to understand that more than mere marketing is necessary. They are asking themselves, "What is the product we are marketing and how can we make it so unique and inviting that it will attract visitors on its own?" . . . Publicly-owned resources must be maintained to the highest level. . . . It is better to have a few well-maintained and exceptionally well-capitalized resources than a broad array of rundown facilities that give the state or city a bad image and turn off the traveler.

## ***The Harsh Realities***



Bannack,  
Gibson House,  
1990. Cheryl  
Clemmensen,  
photographer

Montana has not only not begun to capitalize on its rich legacies of historic and prehistoric sites; it is allowing many of those resources in state ownership to deteriorate at such a rate and in such a way that interpretive development soon may be foreclosed. The resources (financial, personnel, and policy) for protecting, maintaining, and interpreting historic and prehistoric resources in state ownership do not currently exist. The funding, managerial and organizational ability, and planning necessary to seize upon tourism and visitation as a Montana opportunity par excellence are wholly beyond most of our imaginings.

Early 1990 brought news that Virginia City was in jeopardy. Ford Bovey, whose parents were visionaries in the early, vigorous preservation of Virginia City, faced financial obligations, physical preservation needs, and management complexities of enormous proportions. Townspeople, Ford's representatives, local politicians, National Park Service employees, and representatives from history and historic preservation organizations gathered quickly to see how they might help and to determine who could find money or orchestrate legislation. Without much fanfare, the group quickly concluded that the National Park Service, not the Montana State Park System, should—in the best of all scenarios—assume responsibility for the site. The group felt that the odds for securing state money or finding professional state management for the site were nearly impossible. That conclusion was not lightly or easily reached. During that meeting and in subsequent discussions, Virginia City supporters have bridled at the slow pace of federal decision-making and

acquisition. We have winced at the extraordinary price tags that seem to accompany federal work. And, most critically, we have recognized the monstrous irony of turning over—to federal administration—this **Montana birthplace** gem. Its collection of buildings and artifacts, its integrity of architecture, its historical story, and its visitation records are without parallel in existing state historic sites. It is as close right now—even without adequate funding—to being the kind of destination park we so crave for tourism development as any kind of site in state parks administration. But, with all that acknowledged, the folks interested in securing Virginia City's future have not changed their minds. They have not thought that Montana would or could take on the care and management of Virginia City professionally and effectively. If, and it is a big and real if, Congress does not approve study and administration of Virginia City by the National Park Service, the local Virginia City Task Force will try to develop its own mechanisms and fund raising efforts, in cooperation with Ford Bovey, to place preservation and management on a sounder basis. But if Congress does not come through and if local management changes fail to secure sound direction and private money, Montana faces another reality: Virginia City's collections and buildings look mighty attractive to West and East Coast amusement park developers. Montana may be confronting the question of whether Knotts Berry Farm will dazzle visitors with our gold rush, territorial history, or whether we will.

This recommendation on Virginia City, perhaps more than any other indicator illustrates how great and critical our deficiencies in caring for existing historic and prehistoric sites are.

**Historic and prehistoric resources in state ownership for visitation are often in serious physical jeopardy and experience substantial, unchecked deterioration. These same resources are rarely interpreted actively for the public. In fact, our lack of knowledge of our sites—in terms of both history and condition—leaves us unable to jump into immediate better care even if the finances were available to do so.**

▼ **Inventory and Assessment:** Historic site management ordinarily is governed by concrete, researched information, gathered and organized in several formats: historic base maps that outline the evolution of human activity at the site—especially during the time of historical importance (drawn from all written accounts, early photographs, maps, oral history, etc.); traditional intensive archaeological and historical inventory, so that all cultural features have been systematically identified within park boundaries; historic structures reports in which structural engineers and architects have assessed condition, prioritized preservation work needed, identified how the work can be done appropriately; museum artifact catalog records and condition assessments; cultural or management plans that specify the primary historic period and historical themes that each site best represents. Land and Water Conservation Fund monies have paid for limited inventory and assessment at several parks. Bannack is likely the best documented historic park in the system. But for no park is the knowledge of historic and prehistoric resources or the analysis of knowledge and condition sufficient to allow existing staff to proceed in a logical planning fashion.



In the case of sites like Ulm Pishkun, we do not know enough about its archaeological potential to even know how it compares in value to the Head-Smashed-In site in Alberta or other Montana buffalo jumps. We might have something better than Alberta, or something that should not continue in public ownership.

▼ **Protection:** The amount of vandalism at Ulm Pishkun has been so great in recent years that local archaeologists and historians recommended completely closing the park until they could develop better protective mechanisms. The Great Falls Chamber of Commerce now assists FWP with many of those protective duties. A bonfire lighted carelessly and somewhat defiantly next to the Miners Union Hall in the ghost town of Granite burned that building almost to the ground. Funding for adequate stabilization, mothballing, and security has not existed. Parks staff is spread so thin that its physical presence at sites cannot be counted on to provide even that first, most basic level of protection.

▼ **Maintenance and Preservation:** Chief Plenty Coups' Cabin is experiencing rapid, unchecked, almost unnoticed deterioration. FWP maintains for Bannack a list of the basic stabilization measures that are needed, but has been unable to tackle more than the most limited ones. Historic objects in Bannack remain exposed to the sun and in buildings that are not climate-controlled. The pictographs at Pictograph Cave are fading rapidly; the Department has no expertise to record, study, or try to slow down these deterioration processes. Were Montana in the middle of an economic slump, but looking at a situation where our resources had been protected and maintained well through all previous times, we would have different choices. Instead, at no point prior to even the 1980's economic difficulties, has Parks had the dollars or expertise to maintain historic buildings and prehistoric sites to the same basic standards that we all employ with our homes. That leaves us looking at a state full of park resources whose basic physical condition is honestly in jeopardy.

▼ **Interpretation:** On-site personal interpretation of any historic or prehistoric resource is virtually nonexistent, with the exception of Bannack's caretaker. Signs are used sporadically elsewhere; written literature is scarce. The system functions without visitors centers—short of a few visitor contact stations.

As we proceed to further examine this situation and to make recommendations, you will not find many thoughts on additional historic and prehistoric sites that **should be or could be** in the state park system. From this point on, we concentrate more on the rudimentary steps of caring for what we already have. But here, as we concentrate on the harsh realities and the lost opportunities, it is worth considering how many other sites might well be spectacular destination points for visitors interested in western history. Appendix B offers just a sample of historic and archaeological sites that could be spectacular and viable additions to the park system. We urge readers to keep in mind the real implications of this list: the fact that we dare not now concentrate on developing



new, promising sites and must focus first on the most basic protections for our existing historic and prehistoric park sites challenges and undermines our bright, casual conversations on tourism. Are we, in fact, prepared to offer tourists protected, interpreted, developed park sites?

## ***Causes—Why the Reality is so Grim***

The Park Futures Committee Report addresses in broad terms why all park resources are in jeopardy and disarray: there is not enough funding or enough stable funding; Parks have been subsumed within the Department and in the public mind to hunting and fishing; the Department needs policies, long range plans, some new images, some different forms of internal organization to care for parks adequately—even were more money available. The Park Futures Committee findings are critical to the discussion that follows—for the overarching framework and history that they outlined.

But in order to understand the depth of the problem for historic and prehistoric resources—why the loss is so critical and why solutions need to be speedy and complex—the camera again needs to swing in tighter on circumstances and conditions in the state as they specifically relate to historic and prehistoric sites. We tried to ask not just why parks have been so neglected, but why conditions are so tenuous for prehistoric and historic sites.

Here is amalgam, then, of intertwined causes and effects all accounting for historic and prehistoric park resources in jeopardy:

1. **A strong public and agency attitude that historic and prehistoric values are secondary to natural or recreational values.**

Montana's thinking is so rooted in its rich natural resource base that the study of history and prehistory is viewed as a special interest, an esoteric, maybe even less than macho, sidelight. We are the victims of our own history here in which we tend to assume that the stuff of the Old West means hunting, fishing, or at least vigorous hiking and wildlife photography.

If parks in general are subsumed in the Department to an outdoor recreation focus, it is important to recognize that cultural resource preservation and education become buried by natural resource based activities and skills. The very language of "outdoor recreation" discourages public identification with historic buildings and archaeological remains within the park system. These resources appear to be afterthoughts or mislocated, even to the public.

2. The complete absence within the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the Parks Division itself of a core of preservation specialists.

Bannack's current caretaker is a historian. Apart from that, there are no professional historians, historic architects, archaeologists, museum curators, or interpreters anywhere in the Department, much less the Division. The Parks Division does not employ biologists for its natural resources either, but that discipline is at least well represented in the Department.

Many FWP employees appreciate historic and prehistoric values. Many have developed solid skills in historic preservation and interpretation. But the absence of actual training and the absence of job positions requiring that training have a series of impacts. There is no one in the Department to conduct cultural resource inventories, no one to analyze the conditions of historic structures, no one to insure that proposed visitor development will steer clear of archaeological resources, no one to prioritize even the known spots needing maintenance or stabilization, no one to attach dollar figures to preservation needs, no one to write departmental policies for treating historic and prehistoric resources, no one to conduct archaeological or historical base resource research, no one to draft opinions on proposed historic and prehistoric site additions to the system, no one to represent the agency in explaining its cultural resource actions, no one to keep management informed on the real state of historic and prehistoric resources. All advice, guidance, policy setting, or prioritizing of issues related to historic and prehistoric sites is informally developed within the Department and/or is drawn sporadically from outside sources, contracts, recommendations.

Perhaps the single best illustration of why preservation specialists are needed exists in the area of preservation maintenance and rehabilitation. Through the years, Parks staff have worried about the deterioration of historic buildings. With the same creativity and ingenuity that they have used to stretch their time and money for all other parks activities, they have tried to find ways to do the most basic roofing, window, and foundation work. But to that they bring people trained in construction of recreational facilities. Parks required substantial guidance from the Montana Historical Society on even the choices they had in finding windows for the Miners' Union Hall at Elkhorn that (a) would be accurate, (b) provide security from vandalism, and (c) keep the weather out.

In other words, maintenance, planning, protection, management, and interpretation of historic and prehistoric resources in the department all occur on an ad hoc, seat-of-the-pants basis. And, advocacy and philosophizing for this resource, then, becomes even more difficult. Without professional preservation staff within its management team, FWP is not even hearing or learning how many resources and opportunities it is losing.



3. What we know about historic and prehistoric park sites in state ownership—both what makes them important and their condition—is so limited that we cannot even set many priorities, assign existing or new money, establish staffing requirements, or undertake long range planning responsibly.

We have already discussed our absence of knowledge about historic and prehistoric resources as a harsh reality. We include that same factor in this discussion because our very lack of building, site, and condition knowledge has perpetuated other major problems.

There is, always, a critical balance between making the best decisions with what you know now, even if that's not much, and waiting until the information on which to act is acquired.

But the degree of ignorance (clearly tied directly to the absence of staff, money, and priority) has had a direct bearing on the state's fuzziness about the problem and on the Department's difficulty in prioritizing funding needs. If you really do not know what you have and if you really cannot analyze its condition, there is no way to approach the Legislature and say, "Here's our strategy; here's how we need to proceed; here's even a workable estimate of the cost."

This absence of knowledge doesn't require complete inactivity. Roofs can still be repaired and windows kept covered in order to slow down deterioration where possible. But, glossing over the complexity, suggesting short term solutions, proposing dollars figures that will turn out to be far short of capital stabilization needs will further alienate Montanans and other tourists from parks.

4. Historic and prehistoric sites in state ownership for visitation are an odd, internally inconsistent lot—administered by a mixture of organizations.

Montana does not have stated historic and prehistoric site acquisition criteria related specifically to significance and integrity. Political pressure for site acquisition is harder to deflect or respond to thoughtfully without an established state *system* and without established *criteria of significance and integrity*.

Hence, the system administered by the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks contains sites of great historical significance and interpretive potential such as Bannack, and individual buildings or spots such as the Elkhorn Miners' Union Hall, a school, and a homestead house that are difficult to treat as park sites.

Other state-owned historic and prehistoric sites intended for public visitation are administered by different agencies. The Montana Historical Society administers the Original Governor's Mansion; the Society has oversight over the Moss and Daly Mansions, but the Legislature accepted those two sites into state ownership (partial in the case of the Moss Mansion) with the explicit understanding that local



organizations would assume full responsibility for maintenance, rehabilitation, interpretation, and administration of those buildings. The Society was given no funding for or encouragement even to offer those local organizations technical assistance and support.

Finally, several sites in FWP ownership and oversight are managed to various degrees by local volunteers: Fort Owen and Bears Paw Battlefield for example.

A “mixed” system of historic and prehistoric sites of “mixed” ownership and responsibility is not necessarily wrong or unworkable. In fact, within this mixture of responsibilities exist ideas and patterns for cooperative efforts and shared responsibilities that have merit for long-term management. But the absence of a researched, deliberate, and known system leads to duplication of effort, confusion, misunderstandings, frustration, and to more political pressures than might be necessary.

5. The absence of public education and interpretive programs at historic and prehistoric sites perpetuates Montanans’ own failure to understand how rich our history and historic/prehistoric site pool is.

We’ve already treated the absence of interpretation as a harsh reality. But once again, this *problem* loops around and becomes the *cause* for larger problems. Look again at the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Interpretive Centre. Montanans now ooh and aah over that, make special efforts to get there, and clearly view that buffalo jump and its history as fascinating. But in the absence of “the state” supporting, announcing, making visible the fact that we have sites of comparable importance, we don’t behave that way. Most of us do need interpretive facilities to trigger that Sunday afternoon trip—to generate that excitement about a destination and what our children will learn there.

It is important, then, to acknowledge that this absence of public education is self-perpetuating. While interpretive facilities may be a luxury compared with the need to fix leaking roofs and failing foundations, some initial, substantial investment in interpretive facilities, materials, or services may be critical to long-term public and legislative support for a parks capital improvement program.



## ***Solutions: A Strategy for Improving State-Owned and Prehistoric Parks***

The Historic Sites Study Commission wrestled for some time with this section. We were in agreement about the nature or the severity of the problems that now undermine good state stewardship of historic and prehistoric sites. We agreed substantially about the measures needed to reverse the current state-sanctioned deterioration and undervaluing of such resources. But we struggled to present our recommendations in a form that would not downplay or soft peddle the high cost and great effort needed to solve the problem nor spell immediate defeat for a complex and expensive package of needed changes.

Hence, our recommendations are framed in three categories:

*Essential Changes*

*Basic Changes*

*Long Term Changes*

*Essential Changes* address those things that must be done this biennium in order to move from catastrophic problems to minimally acceptable care and use of historic and prehistoric resources now in state ownership. These changes will stop the crisis that now exists.

*Basic Changes* encompass actions that need to be taken to sustain acceptable care and management of cultural resources for public visitation. These recommendations move a little beyond what is needed to stop the crisis and into changes that will let Parks begin to present historic and prehistoric sites professionally to the public. They could be undertaken either this biennium or shifted to the next biennium.

Only in the arena of *Long Term Changes* do we consider improvements, projects, activities, staffing that begin to elevate historic and prehistoric park resources to levels of care and interpretation that will make them clear assets in our tourism promotion efforts. Those changes are stated less definitely. If Montana can make the first two sets of changes, Parks will have much greater internal guidance for long term changes.

The Commission also looked for changes that could be implemented without substantial additional funding at all three levels considered. But it also faced squarely changes that—no matter how creative we were in thinking—could not happen without funding.

Several of our recommendations parallel or match those of the Park Futures Committee. We have starred those. All of our recommendations share the same premises and frameworks used by that Committee. We simply looked more carefully and precisely at how this particular kind of park site must be preserved and presented.



Daly Mansion, Hamilton, Montana,  
1941–42. MHS Photograph Archives,  
Richard Averill Smith, photographer



## *Essential Changes Recommended for Park Cultural Resource Care*

### 1. Secure legislative and gubernatorial directives and support for all new Parks initiatives.

Whether by proclamation, formal approval of reorganization, actual legislation and appropriation, or resolution, both the Governor and the legislature need to use visibility and clout to elevate the state parks system, the problems confronting it, and all the solutions that they support to the status of major public issues.

In this cost-conscious time, and even prior to endorsing actual funding packages and full-time positions (FTEs), the legislature and the Governor can substantially alter public concern and support for parks just by offering deliberate verbal support. Strong messages to the public about the extent to which we are undermining our tourism hopes by failing to care for and develop parks, attendance at meetings with tourism industry representatives to communicate that message, frequent visits to parks, etc., would all begin to change the impression that parks and park issues are quite secondary to hunting license costs and buffalo straying from Yellowstone National Park.

The message will be much stronger and much more believable, however, with concentrated help in finding and securing additional funds for park care and development.

And, we urge that in behavior, statements of interest, and support for particular funding packages, the Governor and the legislature acknowledge historic and prehistoric park sites explicitly and deliberately. They are in a position, in fact, to come right out and recognize that our history has played a lesser role in comparison to outdoor recreation for too long.

Anticipated Cost: None

### 2. Insure the presence of at least two professional cultural resource specialists in the Parks Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks: a cultural resource manager and a cultural resource interpretive specialist. These positions must be graded, placed, and funded at a level to insure that experienced professionals will take the

jobs and that once in the Department, they directly influence management and park planning efforts.

The Commission accompanied this recommendation with a series of critical, supporting observations:

— These two positions can either be drawn from new FTEs or redescribed positions within the Department.

— These two positions do not constitute adequate, full, logical professional staffing in the cultural resource field. They represent literally a stop-gap measure.

— These two positions should not duplicate the one “preservation officer” position now assigned in the Department. The current preservation officer guides all divisions of FWP on either state or federal cultural resource review requirements. The position is regulatory only in orientation.

— Both specialist positions should be written with responsibilities and authority ordinarily associated with Grade 15 or above; candidates should be drawn exclusively from people with comparable prior professional experience with similar levels of oversight and responsibility in the cultural resource field and park interpretation fields.

— The cultural resource manager could be drawn from any of the familiar preservation fields: history, archaeology, architecture, or architectural history, but is likeliest to come from the history or archaeology fields. Most critical, the manager must have prior experience in the philosophy, regulations, standards, and standard practices associated with administering historic and prehistoric sites in public ownership for public visitation.

— The cultural interpretive specialist again could come with a background in any discipline associated with historic and prehistoric sites, but must have substantial prior experience in historic and prehistoric site interpretive writing, exhibit design, promotion, school presentations, policy setting, etc.

These two cultural resource specialists must then concentrate during this biennium on supervising, creating, overseeing, and guiding the tasks further outlined below—still under Essential Changes needed.



Without professional preservation staff in the Department, Parks' cannot begin to tackle the data gathering, prioritizing, and policy setting that is needed. Contracting or borrowing for these services will be far more expensive; the products will not be half as useful. Even more important, the Department needs in-house "good old boy and girl" preservation leadership. The voices from within that explain why special expertise is needed or that sort out dilapidated appearances from serious preservation needs will ultimately direct the Department efficiently and properly to workable, affordable strategies. If all the advice comes from outside, care of historic and prehistoric resources will remain a little understood, somewhat troublesome, difficult process. In other words, the Department has to have its own internal conscience if the current orientation favoring recreation and natural resources is to change.

Anticipated Costs: \$70,000 per year

**\*3. Direct existing park managers to prepare small-scale, site specific management plans.** Provide each park manager with an outline so that plans are somewhat parallel. Direct managers to write the plan for an immediate future, with only limited reference to long range plans. Emphasize content, specificity, actual thinking over stylized writing. Develop an internal system for agency review and approval of such plans, involving the recommendations of the preservation professionals identified above. View these as "mini-plans"—in part so that their preparation is not intimidating and they are not viewed as "sacred" for too long.

Whether or not the full park classification system is completed or the State Park Plan is finished, we believe that these short, individual site management plans will be useful at whatever point they are developed in relationship to larger agency planning.

Even recognizing that plans will change as more data is gathered about historic sites and prehistoric sites, it seems much better to the Commission to get an immediate statement of park goals on paper than to continue, at many sites, with no stated direction.

While this recommendation is obviously germane

to natural and recreational areas as well, its utility for historic and prehistoric sites is easily explained: because historic building and site stabilization is so desperately needed and costly, the clearer and more professional our priorities, the better we will distribute available funds.

Anticipated Costs: None

**\*4. Direct the new team of preservation professionals to prepare contracts for conducting commonsense, site-specific resource value inventories and resource condition assessments.** This recommendation addresses the degree to which no one currently knows the full range of contributing resources that exist in state parks ownership and their potential for interpretation. Nor do we really know enough about their condition to know what long- or short-term preservation and maintenance will cost in dollars, manpower, protection. **The Commission actually gave its first, strongest support to this recommendation.** The Commission believes strongly that the gathering of data about existing parks sites is the only way that future expenditures and efforts will be well directed. If we put all our emphasis on activity, stabilization, personnel, and development of services and facilities now, we will perpetuate the long standing haphazardness in management that has characterized the program. We will just continue flailing about. At one point in its discussion, the Commission referred to this as a **Needs and Opportunities Assessment**—and that may be the very best public title to give the effort.

The value inventory and resource assessment here proposed is a short-hand, combined form of two longer techniques used in historic preservation: the traditional intensive inventory and the historic or prehistoric structures report. Our proposed format is considerably briefer than the form either usually takes, but needs to be in enough detail to offer park managers, legislators, and the public a real set of choices for site preservation and development in the future. We think, for instance, that the team of preservation professionals can devise some checklists or forms to assess building conditions (drawn from sources such as the *Old House Journal*) that can be used first by on-site managers, accomplishing both needed data-gathering and preservation education for the managers. We believe that this level of inventory and assessment may, in fact, be critical to final completion of the



State Parks System Plan and park classification efforts.

We also recommend that all other sites in state ownership prepare the same two sets of documents just described above: the site-specific management plan and the value inventory/needs assessment. That means that the Historical Society should prepare those documents for the Original Governor's Mansion and should try to assist the Moss and Daly Mansion Boards to prepare similar documents.

This project, even when substantially directed by FWP staff, will require separate funding for por-

*Note also that the conditions assessment described will involve existing Parks staff as well as outside expertise.*

5. Assign the preservation professionals identified above with major responsibility to initiate as many of the following tasks as possible:

— identify professionally the sites and buildings where deterioration and resource loss are so critical that something must be fixed immediately. In other words, the cultural resource managers should review specific regional and park recommendations and make final recommendations to the Parks Administrator for immediate maintenance and stabilization needs.

— prepare park policy documents for treatment and interpretation of historic and prehistoric resources. This material has been developed for other national and state park systems. This recommendation calls for these professionals to pick and choose among those existing documents and recommend a set that the Montana Parks System can adopt and follow as its own.

— serve as an internal clearing-house for all proposed work affecting historic and prehistoric resources in the Park System.

Notwithstanding the existing review of proposed work by the State Historic Preservation Office, make sure that any work done at historic and prehistoric sites with the Park System is approved by these two people.

— begin training or finding training opportunities for other Parks staff in cultural resource familiarity and sensitivity.

— begin to outline interpretation/education strategies. Identify private individual and private publishers who might be interested in publishing on historic park sites and themes, be available to other park staff for some interpretive training in historic and prehistoric site presentation, be the



Three Forks of the Missouri, MHS Photograph Archives

tions of contracted work and for minimum printing and preparation costs—so that the findings of this assessment can be used by public as well as agency groups.

Anticipated Costs: \$240,000 over 4 years

*Footnote on costs associated with inventory and assessment needs: Two professionals within FWP will not be able to oversee contracts for all this work at one time. We recommend that the 30,000 acres and the 60 park sites in state ownership be surveyed over a 4 year period at this modified reconnaissance level, with an annual level of effort at \$60,000.*



formal liaison with the Travel Promotion Bureau, Department of Commerce, to coordinate state literature with park resources, begin a systematic effort to inform Montanans about historic and prehistoric park values, and develop initial school/field trip packages.

*A note on the importance of interpretation: unless and until Montanans understand just how valuable our park resources are and begin to treat them in the way that Alberta's Head-Smashed-in-Buffalo Jump is treated, for example, the struggle for funding and care will likely remain about the same. Stopping the crisis of site deterioration is of primary importance to the Commission. But ending the void of information about park values is equally critical to sustained care in the Commission's thinking.*

*A second note on the way in which this recommendation is phrased: During their first two years in Parks, two cultural resource specialists can only begin these efforts, not bring them to fruition. It will take at least the level of staffing described in Basic Changes to complete these tasks. But the Commission felt it critical to begin this level of policy-setting right away, since the absence of these policies has undermined many good Department intentions.*

Anticipated Costs: None

- \*6. Build affordable cultural resource assistance for FWP by creating four organizations which can continue to address the issues that the Parks Department, the Park Futures Committee, and the Historic Sites Study Commission have been tackling.

There are a range of major issues that will await resolution over time, with additional information and experience, or with the involvement of more people. As additional information on historic and prehistoric resources in parks is gathered, FWP and the legislature will face additional choices. Recognizing that any immediate financial help will be limited, the use of interagency and public groups to provide guidance and oversight will sustain, inform, and strengthen all the efforts that

are taken within Parks. The most attractive means or "vehicles" to reaching better decisions seemed likely to come from ongoing support, discussion, and partnership groups. The Commission identified four kinds of organizations or organizational changes that could sustain and improve the attention that has been given to Parks during this biennium.

- a. Rename the Fish and Game Commission the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission and urge the Governor to appoint individuals to the Commission with a specific knowledge of and interest in parks and park management.
- b. Direct local park administrators to help organize local park support groups (Friends of Pictograph Cave and the Rosebud Battlefield, for example). Seek members for these groups that include interested users and interested resource specialists. Encourage these groups to be a source of volunteer assistance, lobbying, advocacy, and oversight.

The Commission recognizes that groups of this kind require a good deal of staff education and direction. Still, the Commission believes that sustained, educated interest from the public can offer Parks expertise it may not be able to afford for some time and can, in the long run, improve Parks chances for better funding and better public support.

- c. Create a working committee of staff in the Department of Commerce, Travel Promotion, FWP, and the Montana Historical Society to find ways to mesh promotional efforts and literature with actual historic and prehistoric sites and resource values. Encourage this group to develop recommendations for the following legislature if funding, organizational, or authority changes would help integrate tourism promotion with historic site development.
- d. Seek formal legislative authorization for a Parks Cultural Resources Advisory Board.

The Commission recommends this option with special enthusiasm, in that it offers Parks staff an immediate, affordable source of assistance.



The Commission recommends that this statewide Advisory Board continue the thinking and investigations of the Historic Sites Study Commission, that it be designed to provide Parks a professional cultural resource conscience as Parks is developing its own staff in this area, that it take advantage of the amount of professional cultural resource expertise in the state already. Specifically, the Commission believes that such a Board can assist the 2 new cultural resource specialists in tasks such as:

- preparing of contracts for reconnaissance inventory and condition assessments;
- developing cultural resource policies;
- providing quick technical assistance on specific cultural resource problems (how bad is the roof; where can we get a professional writer for this brochure, etc.);
- continuing to improve public knowledge of cultural resources in the Parks;
- developing additional agency and legislative recommendations for sound care and interpretation of historic and prehistoric resources in Parks—to continue the Commission's work.

The Commission further recommends that this Board be created by agency appointments as follows:

- 5 people with professional expertise in cultural resource interpretation and preservation areas, appointed by the Montana Historical Society;
- 7 members of the public interested in cultural resources, appointed by and from each of the 8 FWP districts;
- 2 interested legislators invited to participate by Parks;
- a Native American, appointed by the Montana Historical Society.

The Commission recommends that this group meet in various locations around the state and that Board members be asked to review and comment on issues at home apart from meetings, as needed by the Department.

Perhaps the best illustration of how such a group could dramatically improve historic and prehistoric site care in Parks can be drawn from Bozeman and Billings where local preservation groups have recruited architects, accountants, and historians

to offer private homeowners and businessmen specific technical assistance on a volunteer basis. This donation of professional skill immediately improves public knowledge and really demands an improved level of concern from the private sector when “high paid” professionals, not just government employees, are willing to help a project.

Anticipated Costs: \$5,000 in travel and per diem costs

7. **Create travel and educational opportunities to broaden legislative and agency understanding of other state park systems, especially those with a broad range of historic sites.**

We recommend that a small group of legislators and Parks staff people visit a range of historic sites in places such as Alberta, Utah, Michigan, Iowa, and Minnesota—areas where investment in historic properties for visitation has been substantial and deliberate, even in remote portions of those states. For instance, we recommend that legislators visit places like Fayette, Michigan, an iron mining and smelting town similar in historic appearance and somewhat similar in historic theme to Virginia City, or that they visit Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Centre outside Fort McLeod.

We recommend that, in addition to or in lieu of some travel, that legislators and Parks staff be given an opportunity to review in some detail slide shows, films, and literature from areas with well-funded park sites.

In short, the Commission believes that some of Montana's reluctance to invest in historic and prehistoric resources in its state park system can be attributed to how limited our knowledge is of the attractiveness, success, and holding power of such sites elsewhere.

Anticipated Cost: \$4,000 for travel to no cost

8. **Revise state travel and travel promotional literature quickly to highlight historic parks, distinguish between locally administered historic sites and state parks, and provide additional information on related historic facilities (like beds and breakfasts) for travelers with a specific interest in Montana past. See**



opportunities to improve highway directional signing.

This has already begun. To a degree this is a fine tuning job—a process of thinking more specifically about how visitors may want to plan trips and what kinds of facilities and sites they might look for in packages. Revisions to the state highway map cannot encompass all the recommendations offered

9. Insure that decisions about treatment of historic and prehistoric resources are clearly pinned to specific positions in the Department.

Even while professionals are being hired, assessments made, priorities for work reached, historic and prehistoric resources now owned by the Department can be better protected if *everybody*



Elkhorn, Montana, September 30, 1987.  
John Smart, MHS photographer

above, but can accommodate some. And, some of the additional state and travel country literature could be edited and reorganized to focus attention on factors such as historic themes or who owns and administers the sites. We have every reason, for instance, to offer “packages” on Lewis and Clark sites, the Nez Perce Trail, or Indian War sites. Or, we could highlight the state’s prehistoric resource parks.

Highway and secondary road signs directing visitors to parks also need consistency, replacement, and refurbishment.

Anticipated Cost: None, can be done as part of regular revisions

knows that only one person can say “yes” or “no” to work that affects historic resources. We continue to find resource loss occurring throughout the state from spur-of-the-moment decisions to put in some new windows, change a path, add some artifacts, etc. So placing responsibility for all decisions regarding resources with a single manager and insisting that all other agency staff play by that rule helps to stop often well-intentioned but haphazard change.

Anticipated Cost: None



### *Basic Changes Recommended for Park Cultural Resource Care*

1. Insure that the reconnaissance inventory and conditions assessment begun as an Essential Change be continued.

Anticipated Costs: As identified above

2. Create positions for 5 additional professional cultural resource positions in Parks, either by providing authority for new positions or re-classifying existing positions: an archaeologist or historian (whichever disciplines have not been filled under *Essential Changes*), a historical architect, a paleontologist, a curator, and a Native American Traditional Values specialist. These positions should be at the same grade and level of responsibility assigned to the original two positions.

The Commission recommends that this expanded body of professional staff be hired at the same grade levels as those recommended for the first two cultural resource specialists hired.

Anticipated Costs: \$175,000 per year

3. Organize the full complement of cultural resource specialists into a professional preservation team and direct the team to complete the task begun in Essential Change #5.

Anticipated Cost: None

4. Direct the preservation team to organize to provide parks with predictable, organized technical assistance for specific preservation problems, including recommendations for prioritizing budget requests, developing research designs for data retrieval when needed, and preparing plans and specifications for at least some preservation and stabilization projects required.

Anticipated Costs: None other than some additional travel

5. Direct the preservation team to develop, in conjunction with the Parks Cultural Resource Advisory Board, a long range strategy for preserving and interpreting parks and expanding the park system so as to truly capitalize on Montana's historic and prehistoric legacy.

Anticipated Costs: None

6. Direct the preservation team to provide guidance to other Parks staff in creation of model parks, including selection, priorities in care, interpretation, etc.

Anticipated Costs: None

### *Long Range Changes for Park Cultural Resource Care*

1. Direct the preservation team, in cooperation with the Parks Cultural Resource Advisory Board, to develop criteria for future park designation and development.

Anticipated Costs: None

2. Direct the preservation team to conduct specific inventory and assessment of other sites, especially in Parks or other state agency administration, that are likely candidates for park development. See Appendix B.

These two recommendations reflect the Commission's strong belief that Montana could and likely should expand the number of historic and prehistoric sites in its park system. But the Commission thinks it critical to first demonstrate that the state is willing to provide adequate cultural resource staff for sound care of those resources and to be guided in any expansion effort by professional agency/public guidance on that expansion. This addresses the need to stop the willy-nilly acquisition of sites without either a visible plan of acquisition or adequate stewardship for them. It also addresses the foolishness of thinking we should never expand the park system.



## RECKONING WITH TIME

Finally, it recognizes that many good candidates may already be in state ownership, and that professional inventory and assessment of them will provide the legislature with the information needed to make decisions about them.

Anticipated Costs: Additional funding for inventory efforts will be needed

3. Create positions and position descriptions for historians, archaeologists, curators, or Native American Traditional Vales interpreters, as appropriate, for specific park areas. Anticipate providing funding for professional, but entry level grades.

The Commission believes that central office, highly graded preservation professionals are needed to identify where and what kind of park changes in cultural resource staffing are needed. Nonetheless, some of those locations are pretty obvious: Bannack, a combined Pictograph/Rosebud/Chief Plenty Coups, etc.

Anticipated Funding: \$25,000 per position

## ***Some Ending Thoughts***

The Commission believes that Montana's investment in historic and prehistoric parks will pay off richly. Once the United States got over its long standing defiance of Europe, the nation decided that protecting historic sites and buildings important for education and commemoration made good political sense. Citizens who understand and respect the development of their town, region, state, or country are much more likely to invest time and thought in that town, region, state, or country. They are, in short, likely to be better, more involved citizens.

So, even if Montanans were not interested in out-of-state tourism as an industry to support our economy, we have reason to protect, develop, and treasure our own state historic sites. The better we understand Montana's past the more likely we are to make wise decisions for the state in the future.

But the fact also remains that we hope that tourism will play a growing and more stable role in sustaining us here. We want tourism dollars to lift us a little beyond the insecurity of boom and bust resource extraction. We want tourism dollars to let us care for and enjoy this place while others do so too.

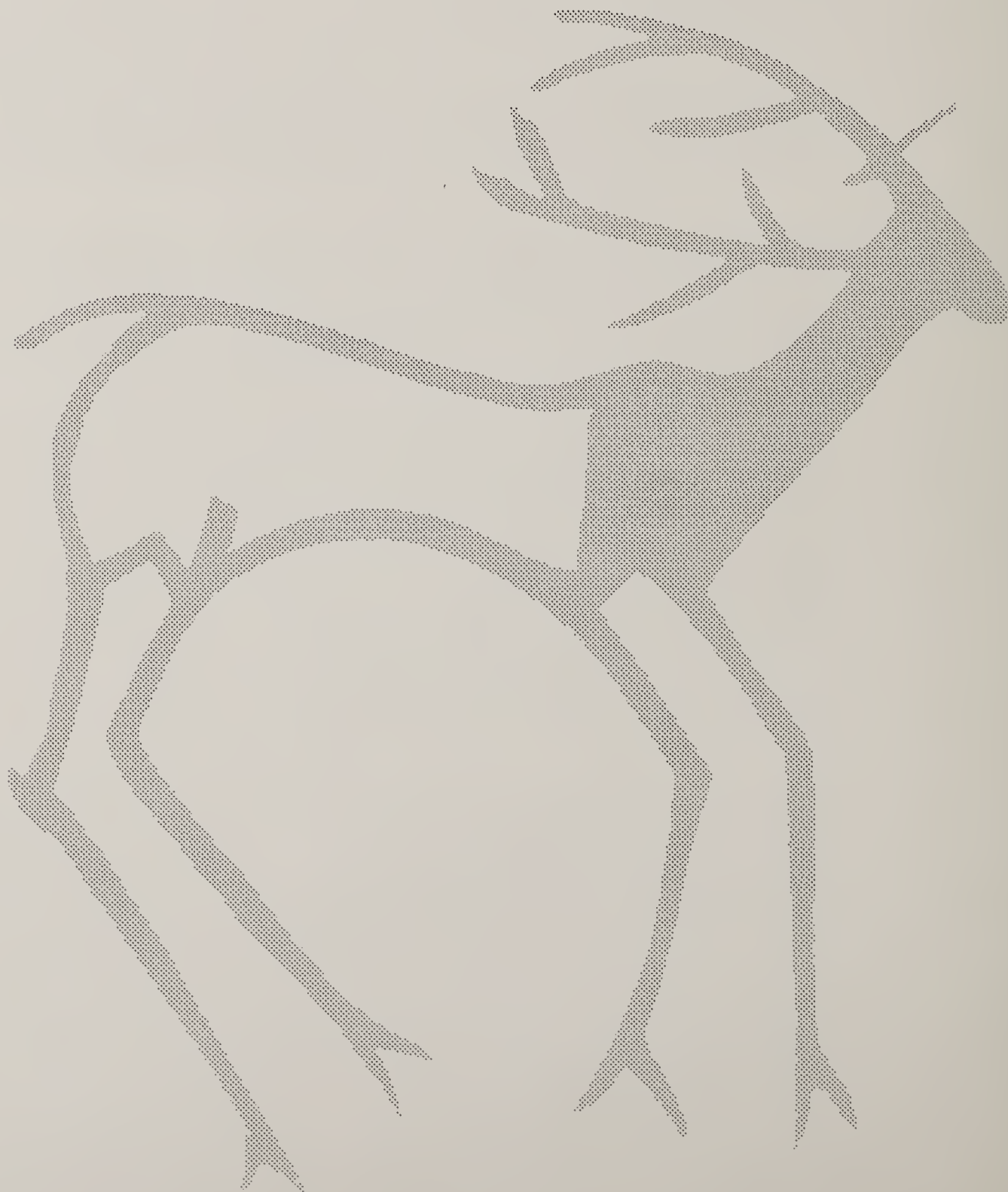
Those hopes and dreams existing, we can either let them remain hopes and dreams or turn them into realities. Put bluntly, if we want to sustain our past and want historic and prehistoric sites to attract and hold visitors, we have to care for them—we have to decide that we will spend money in preservation, interpretation, and site development. We are at one of those interesting places where our choices are clear. We can get busy and invest time, money, creativity, and political support in our goal or let our historic sites deteriorate and hope forlornly that visitors will still find sites even when the signs are down and trust that some folks will come to visit just on the strength of their interest, even when we have not provided much interpretation or literature.

No, we do not have to and in many cases should not think in terms of visitor centers as grand as those of the National Park Service or primary highway-quality roads into all our parks. We have every reason to adapt Montana's historic and prehistoric site development to our landscapes, the historically important remoteness of our sites, and finally to real budgetary limits. We think of the Nine Mile Remount Depot as an example to offer legislators and park planners. The Nine Mile Remount complex, thirty miles west of Missoula, is on the Lolo National Forest. The dozen buildings there were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. They were the center for the U. S. Forest Service's packing activities in the Northern Rockies for almost 30 years. Though the Remount Depot is now also a ranger station, it has retained and regained some of its original packing duties. In the mid-1980s, the Lolo Forest realized how interesting a story that complex could tell for Forest Service employees as well as the public. They went about turning one of the larger buildings into space for agency training and another portion into a small interpretive center. Visitors are now invited to Nine Mile from Interstate 90. They find, when they arrive, not only an active Forest Service complex, but an interpreted walking tour through it and professional exhibits and interpretation. The Forest Service did not accomplish that



through a huge, line-item appropriation, but by persistent, small-scale budget adjustments; the interaction of archaeologists, historians, architects, and forest rangers; and the commitment of some savvy forest administrators.

So, we can reckon with time in several ways: we can let time takes its toll on our major historic sites without interruption or much public enjoyment. Or we can reckon with how rich a past we have and how valuable that past is to visitors and ourselves and invest in its preservation and interpretation.



## Appendix A

### *State-Owned Park Properties*

*An asterisk will indicate sites with predominant historic or prehistoric values.*

#### *Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Administration*

1. Ackley Lake
2. Anaconda Smelter Stack\*
3. Bannack\*
4. Bears Paw Battlefield\*
5. Beaverhead Rock\*
6. Beavertail Hill
7. Big Arm
8. Big Pine
9. Blackfoot River
10. Black Sandy
11. Canyon Ferry
12. Chief Plenty Coups\*
13. Clark's Lookout\*
14. Cooney
15. Council Grove\*
16. Deadman's Basin
17. East Gallatin
18. Elkhorn\*
19. Elmo
20. Finley Point
21. Fort Owen\*
22. Frenchtown Pond
23. Giant Springs\*
24. Granite\*
25. Greycliff Prairie Dog Town
26. Hell Creek
27. Holter Lake
28. Lake Elmo
29. Lambeth
30. Les Mason
31. Lewis and Clark Caverns
32. Logan
33. Lone Pine
34. Lost Creek

35. Madison Buffalo Jump\*
36. Makoshika (cultural values likely excellent, but unresearched)
37. Medicine Rock
38. Missouri Headwaters\*
39. Missouri River Road
40. Natural Bridge
41. Nelson
42. Painted Rocks
43. Parker Homestead\*
44. Pictograph Cave\*
45. Pirogue Island
46. Placid Lake
47. Rosebud Battlefield\*
48. Salmon Lake
49. Sluice Boxes
50. Smith River
51. Spring Meadow Lake
52. Thompson Falls
53. Tongue River Reservoir
54. Ulm Pishkun\*
55. Wayfarers
56. West Shore
57. Whitefish Lake
58. Wild Horse Island
59. Wild Missouri River
60. Yellow Bay

#### *Montana Historical Society Administration*

1. Original Governor's Mansion\*
2. Daly Mansion\* in cooperation with the Daly Mansion Preservation Trust
3. Moss Mansion\* (partially owned by the City of Billings) in cooperation with the Billings Preservation Society



## Appendix B

### *Good-Looking Candidates for State/Park Administration*

**Fort Assinniboine, Havre**, already owned by the state. Interpreted on a limited basis by a volunteer group. The Fort is used primarily as an agricultural experiment station.

**Mount Haggin Wildlife Area, Deer Lodge County**, owned by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for animal habitat. Contains both archaeological sites of tremendous importance and an array of historic mining sites.

**Butte**, multiple ownership. Local Butte organizations have long dreamed and planned for a state or national historic park, patterned after the management of Lowell, Massachusetts. In that pattern, few sites changed ownership, but some buildings and sites become the focal point for public preservation and interpretation, and the remaining areas are revealed and explained to visitors through interpreted walking and driving tours.

**Holy Family Mission and Cemetery**, private and tribal ownership. This set of buildings on the Blackfeet Reservation offers an excellent opportunity to interpret European/American acculturation attempts and the response of the tribes to them.

**Two Medicine Fight Site**, private ownership. This is the Lewis and Clark Expedition site at which two Indians were killed. The setting remains intact. It offers the opportunity to interpret several important Lewis and Clark themes.

**Fort Peck Dam**, predominately federal ownership. We tend to take this site for granted, but in terms of national policy and impact to the state, the construction of the dam is of monumental importance. The dam itself can be further interpreted along with the remains of the planned Fort Peck townsite, and the string of boomtowns in which most workers lived. It is worth remembering that very little has been done yet nationwide to interpret the Depression. At the same time, there are more than 50 oral history interviews available to aid us in interpreting and developing this property, and more former dam workers and residents still alive whose memories could be tapped.





